

TLS

THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

FRIDAY • 2 JANUARY 1981 • No 4057 • 40p



This German woodcut of St. Coloman (Nuremberg, 1613), attributed to Hans Springinklee, a pupil of Albrecht Dürer, is taken from *Heiliges Wendianus de Holzschlütze bis zum Ende des 17. Jahrhunderts* (224pp, Karl Robert Lange, wiesche Nachfolger Hans Röster, 3 7845 7220 0). St. Coloman holds a model of a church in his right hand. Thought to be either Irish or a Scot, he was hanged in 1013 in Stockarum near Vienna; the locals, unable to understand what he was saying, thought he was a spy. His name is evoked for the healing of horses and cattle. (See also the illustration on page 14.)

**Beatty and the end of
British naval supremacy**

**The psychology
of the psychic**

**Goethe and the Greeks
by Hugh Lloyd-Jones**

**French and German
dictionaries: Oxford,
Larousse, Brockhaus**

**Offenbach: opera
and the uses of parody**

**Cabot Lodge the Elder;
new light on Tocqueville**

**The uncertainties of
Cowper**

**Poems by Peter Porter,
Alistair Elliot,
Kevin Crossley-Holland,
William Scammell**

**Film in history; Kenneth Tynan;
the last years of the ICS**

**The uncollected
Faulkner**

الشرق الأوسط

TLS Special numbers 1981

Academic Publishers	FEB 20
Spring Book Offer	FEB 27
Spring Export	MAR 27
Children's Books I	APR 3
Art	MAY 1
Japan	22
Reference Books	JUN 5
Crime & Espionage	12
University Presses	JUL 3
Holland	24
Children's Books II	31
Export	SEP 18
Book Production	25
Children's Books III	OCT 9
Frankfurt I	16
Frankfurt II	NOV 20
Children's Books IV	

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Local History
Ireland
Science Fiction
Military Books
Music
Micropublishing

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THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

JANUARY 2 1981

contents

PAUL AL KENNEDY	Stephen Roskill: Admiral of the Fleet Earl Beatty: Charles Beatty: Our Admiral: Anthony Pollen: The Great Gunner Scandal: Mandrake (poem)
WILLIAM SCAMMELL	
JOHN THOMPSON	William C. Widener: Henry Cabot Lodge and the Search for an American Foreign Policy
HUGH BROGAN	James T. Schleifer: The Making of Tocqueville's Democracy in America
C. J. RAWSON	John D. Baird and Charles Ryskamp (Editors): The Poems of William Cowper
SHEILA SMITH	Peter Faulkner: Against the Age - An Introduction to William Morris
PETER RICKARD	H. Ferrar, J. A. Hutchinson and J. D. Baird: The Concise Oxford French Dictionary - Second Edition
S. S. PRAWER	Claude Dubois (Editor-in-Chief): Petit Larousse en Couleurs
ERIC STOKES	Gerhard Wahrig, Hildegard Kramer, Harold Zimmerman (Editors): Brockhaus Wahrig Deutsches Wörterbuch
RONALD DORR	Roland Hunt and John Harrison: The District Officer in India 1930-1947
PAUL BAILEY	John D. Pierson: Tokutomi Sato, 1863-1957
PATRICIA CRAIG	Joseph Blotner (Editor): Uncollected Stories of William Faulkner
ANDREW HUSLOP	Judith Bryant Wittenberg: Faulkner - The Transfiguration of Biography
PAUL SMITH	Lyall H. Powers: Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha Comedy
KEVIN CROSSLEY-JOLAND	Fiction
PETER CONRAD	John Bernstein: Departures
CAROL RUMENS	John Kobal: The Art of the Great Hollywood Portrait Photographers 1925-1940
STUART SUTHERLAND	Ronald Haver: David O. Selznick's Hollywood
JEREMY CHURCH	Pierre Sorlin: The Film in History
HUGH LLOYD-JONES	Children in the Cherry Tree (poem)
ALISTAIR ELLIOT	Commentary
PETER PORTER	Offenbach Centenary
JOHN HEATH-STUBBS	Cunning Stunts Christmas Show (Tricycle Theatre)
D. A. N. JONES	To the Editor
PHYLLIS GROSSKURTH	David Marks and Richard Kammann: The Psychology of the Psychic
PHILIP MASON	John Taylor: Science and the Supernatural
J. L. M. STEWART	Paul Collingwood: Why Big Pterosaurs are Rare
PETER KEMP	Goethe and the Greeks (Article)
EDWARD LARRISSY	Twenty-Four Centuries Ago (poem)
PATRICIA CRAIG	Cleaning the Picture at the Edges (poem)
JANE DRYCE	Thomas Blackburn: Bread for the Winter Birds
JULIA BRIGGS	Kenneth Tynan: Show People - Profiles in Entertainment
ROBIN RUSS	Chushichi Tsuzuki: Edward Carpenter 1844-1929 Prophet of Human Fellowship
LINDSAY DUGUID	Yusef Beldjones: Child of the Tropics - Victorian Memoirs
BRIAN MONTGOMERY	Jack Sullivan: Elegant Nightmares - The English Ghost Story from Le Fanu to Blackwood
MARTIN CRADLE	Judith Wilt: Ghosts of the Gothic
GWYN HARRIES-JENKINS	Paul A. Dove: Destructive Poetics
	Fiction
	Roselind Wade: Red Letter Day
	Denys Val Baker: Rome
	Daubudzo Marachera: Black Sunlight
	Mog Buxton: No Barbed Wire
	Helen Icke (Editor): A Chilling Collection
	Mary Williams: A Chilling Collection
	Robert Alekman: Intrusions
	Robert Alekman: Intrusions
	Bernard Waller: A patience
	Nicola Thorne: The Perfect Wife and Mother
	David More: Master of Deception - Tangled Webs in London and the Middle East
	J. M. Lee: The Churchill Coalition
	Anthony Bruce: The Purchase System in the British Army, 1660-1871

Among this week's contributors

PAUL BAILEY's most recent novel is <i>Old Soldiers</i> , 1980.	JULIA BRIGGS is the author of <i>Night Visions: The Rise and Fall of the Anglo-German Antagonism 1860-1914</i> .	HUGH BROGAN is the author of <i>Tocqueville</i> , 1979.	PETER RICKARD's books include <i>Romantic Opera and Literary Form</i> , 1977, and <i>Imagining America</i> , 1980.	RONALD DORR's most recent book is <i>Shogun: A Portrait of a Japanese Village</i> , 1979.	ALISTAIR ELLIOT's parallel text editions of Verlaine and Heine were published in 1979.	PHYLLIS GROSSKURTH's biography of Horacio Ellis was published in 1980.	JOHN HEATH-STUBBS's most recent collection of poems is <i>The Walled Men: Poems</i> , 1979.	D. A. N. JONES's novels include <i>Arnie</i> in 1968, now <i>Noter</i> had it so good, 1980.	PETER KEMP's critical study <i>Martin</i> was published in 1974.
PAUL M. KENNEDY's books include <i>The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery</i> , 1976, <i>The Rise of the Anglo-German Antagonism 1860-1914</i> .	EDWARD LARRISSY is a lecturer in English at the University of Warwick.	HUGH LLOYD-JONES is Regius Professor of Greek at the University of Oxford. His most recent book is <i>Myths of the Zodiac</i> , 1978.	PHILIP MASON's books include <i>Patience of Don Juan</i> , 1970, and <i>Kippling: The Glass, the Shadow and the Fire</i> , 1975.	PETER PORTER's most recent collection of poems is <i>The Coast of Scapulars</i> , 1978.	S. S. PRAWER's books include <i>Karl Marx and World Literature</i> , 1976.	C. J. RAWSON's books include <i>Henry James and the Augustan Ideal</i> in 1972, and <i>Gulliver and the Gentle Reader</i> , 1973.	PAUL SMITH is the author of <i>La</i> and <i>France au sein de la</i> .		

NAVAL HISTORY

On the turn of the tide

By Paul M. Kennedy

STEPHEN ROSKILL:
Admiral of the Fleet Earl Beatty: The Last Naval Hero
430pp. Collins. £12.95.
0 00 216278 4

CHARLES BEATTY:
Our Admiral: A Biography of Admiral of the Fleet Earl Beatty
211pp. W. H. Allen. £7.95.
0 491 02388 X

ANTHONY POLLEN:
The Great Gunner Scandal: The Mystery of Jutland
280pp. Collins. £7.50.
0 00 216298 9

Of all Britain's wartime naval leaders since Nelson, none (except perhaps Mountbatten) was as popular with the fleet and the nation as David Beatty; and of all the battles fought by the Royal Navy since Trafalgar, none has been more tirelessly debated and scrutinized than the clash at Jutland early in the summer of 1916. Yet, whereas many observers, regarded Beatty as a second Trafalgar. On May 31, 1917, the first anniversary of the battle, Beatty privately confessed that while most Britons still thought it a day for rejoicing, he viewed it as a day for sackcloth and ashes. "Even when the High Seas Fleet steamed into the Fifth of Port to surrender in November 1918, neither Beatty nor his men were fully satisfied. Somehow the Royal Navy's wartime role had been less glorious, and less substantial, than had been expected; and that acrimonious postmortem, the so-called "Jutland controversy" of the 1920s, together with the severe financial cutback to the shipbuilding programme and the acceptance of a mere parity of numbers with the United States Navy, all suggested that the Senior Service had rather lost its way. And so it had. Yet paradoxically, this had occurred when Beatty was at the height of his fame and influence, as Commander of the Battle Cruiser Squadron (1913-16), then Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Fleet (1916-19), and finally as First Sea Lord (1919-27). How could a "second Nelson" exist in such a tarnished, disappointing circumstances?

The books reviewed here are directly concerned either with Beatty or with Jutland and, to a greater or lesser extent, with the larger issue of what was happening to the Royal Navy as it entered the modern age. Of the three works Roskill's biography of Beatty is by far the most substantial, which is scarcely surprising given the author's distinguished naval philosophy and his utilization of a wide range of archival sources. At the same time, it is a fair to claim, we have a more definitive study of the admiral together with a wealth of additional observations and comments about the service as a whole. Although there are one or two factual errors, and some of Roskill's statements can be disputed, the overall result is very impressive indeed.

This picture of Beatty which emerges in this study is by no means an uncritical one. His bravery and dash during the Nile campaign and the Boxer uprising are unquestionable, as was his ability to think clearly and express himself fully when needed. He was a man of great energy and staff who later in his career he showed at the rigidity of the admiralty's fighting instructions—especially the emphasis upon strict tactical tactics and the dislike of independent thought—and when the text moves from personal reminiscences and family lore to observations upon naval matters its value declines steeply. Fatuous descriptions and erroneous facts abound: Fisher and Beresford are elevated again to being Sea Lords in 1912 (page 59), the battle of Tishima is misdated (page 76), Beatty and Erbe are imagined to have persuaded "the Russians to become our allies against Germany" by visiting Kronstadt in 1913 (pages 62-67), and so on—causing one to wonder whether the British publishing industry's present plight has led to the abandonment of using readers to scrutinize draft manuscripts. It would be unkind to spend more time upon the historical errors in this book, the more especially since the author of *Our Admiral* views it as a personal memoir, and tribute; but it has been difficult for this reviewer, at least, to avoid speculating how much Mr Beatty may now be learning about his uncle from Roskill's biography.

Apart from an excessive willingness to offer comments (some favourable, but most disapproving) upon the opinions of his American "opposite number", Professor Arthur Marder, Roskill's book emerges as a balanced and judicious work. It is so because, while offering new insights into Beatty's character and private life, he also sets this biography into a much larger framework so that it becomes, by degrees, a "life and times" account. The Battle of Jutland, for example, is analysed not simply in respect of Beatty's own role in it, but also for what it tells us of the state of the Navy at that time. And the general message is that, despite the various improvements which were made to the service as it was dragged, kicking and screaming, into the nineteenth century, it was still deficient in so many respects. In Roskill's view, the Royal Navy's staff training was too rigid, its battle tactics questionable, its experience of night-fighting non-existent, its missile (torpedoes and torpedoes) defective, its command and communications problems manifold, its ships' designs flawed, and its strategic thinking backward. If this is so, then the received notion that Fisher had eliminated most of the service's weaknesses before 1914 now seems open to severe questioning.

Perhaps the most hair-raising defect of all was that the Navy possessed no effective fire-control system. The great costs of the pre-war naval race, the efforts to construct bigger and bigger warships, Jellicoe's many schemes to meet up with the High Seas Fleet—all these were rendered nearly worthless in actual battle because there was no way of calculating accurately the distances between two rapidly-moving groups of ships. Yet, by a cruel irony, the Admiralty had been offered, but then turned down, a sophisticated fire-control system which had been developed before the war by a brilliant inventor, Arthur Pollen. In its place, the service preferred a system offered by one of its own officers, Captain F. C.

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Dreyer, who had plagiarized parts of Pollen's scheme but not enough to guarantee accurate fire control. Only in the early 1920s did the Royal Navy install Pollen's system into their warships and, in the same period, the Royal Commission on Awards and Inventions granted Pollen adequate compensation for his invention.

This remarkable tale is discussed at some length by Roskill but it is told in full by the inventor's son, Anthony Pollen, in *The Great Gunner Scandal*; this is a very competent book and, if it is coloured in parts by filial devotion, it is none the less useful to have this matter cleared up. It is, moreover, one of the few works of naval history which offers information upon the relationship between the Admiralty on the one hand and inventors and private contractors on the other. All too often scholars refer blithely to the "modernization" of the fleet without any consideration of the technical, fiscal and institutional obstacles which need to be overcome in that process.

The Pollen story also sheds fresh light upon the contentious issue of Beatty's battlecruisers at Jutland, where three of them were blown up by enemy shells. His famous remark that "There were no such things as battlecruisers in the United States, wrong with our bloody ships today" was, alas, all too true. The British "vase" were not only poorly protected, but, in the confused and misty conditions of this North Sea battle, they could not properly sight their guns upon the enemy. Beatty and his sailors did not know it at the time nor, of course, did the expert British public. Yet there is now overwhelming evidence to suggest that one reason why there was no "second Trafalgar" on May 31, 1916 was that the Royal Navy's chief instruments of war were defective. Relative to their time, Nelson's squadrons were much more superior against the foe in respect of gunnery, capacity to receive punishment, communications and battle experience than was the case with Jellicoe and Beatty's fleets.

On the other hand, would it really have made that much difference to the overall outcome of the First World War had British warships been blessed with superior design and equipment? Arthur Pollen, and his son, clearly thought so; and, if *The Great Gunner Scandal* can be criticized, it is that when it turns from technical details to grand strategy and politics, its assertions become much more simplistic and questionable. But the Pollens were not alone in this assumption. After all, Beatty himself wrote that at Jutland he had been within reach of "the greatest victory" the world had ever seen... and most popular naval histories tend to share this view.

point. It is, of course, a nonsense. A decisive British victory at Jutland, with (say) no major losses to the Grand Fleet and ten German capital ships sunk, would have altered the overall course of the war not one jot. Even as it was, the results of that battle left the strategic situation unchanged: the Royal Navy commanded the exits from the North Sea, and the German Navy had not the strength to dispute that command. Whether Scheer lost one ship or twenty was irrelevant. What Jutland did was to hurt British pride, not its naval mastery. And most of the huffing and puffing in the "Jutland controversy" of the 1920s was to do with personal reputations, not with strategic realities.

Yet, that naval mastery which Beatty, no less than Nelson, took for granted was slipping away from Britain in these years for other reasons. Near the very end of his biography Captain Roskill notes that the influence exerted on the 1914-18 war by the British fleet in no way compares to the exerted by Nelson's in the wars against Republican and Napoleonic France; but he does not elaborate on this intriguing admission, and the two other books reviewed here display no sustained interest in the larger context in which Beatty, Jellicoe, Fisher, Pollen and all the rest had to operate. Even today, it seems, naval history is overwhelmingly concerned with admirals, battles and guns.

But the ultimate reason why Beatty could never achieve the historical stature and importance of Nelson was not to do with personalities or command structures or fire-control systems; it had to do with long-term economic and geo-political trends. The rising powers of the twentieth century, the United States, Russia and even Imperial Germany, were much less vulnerable to the workings of sea power than the Royal Navy's earlier opponents, the Spanish, Dutch and French Empires, had ever been. Against near-atomic, continent-wide states, a naval blockade was slow and ineffective—although Britain's own economy remained uniquely vulnerable, especially to the U-boat. That new weapon was, moreover, no danger to 1917 that Beatty and the Admiralty were forced to keep the Grand Fleet out of much of the North Sea. In any case, Germany and its allies in the First World War could only be defeated by the application of massive military pressure, which reduced the Royal Navy to a secondary role and simultaneously weakened the country's manpower and financial shows. By the end of the war, Britain was in no position to indulge in a naval race against a much more powerful United States, and the real achievement of the Washington naval treaty which Beatty and his fellow Sea Lords so resented was to disguise the passing of Britain's naval primacy behind this agreement on fleet numbers.

In sum, the strategic circumstances of the era in which Beatty lived made it extremely difficult, if not impossible, for any British admiral to assume Nelson's mantle. In the 1914-18 conflict the Royal Navy could not of itself win the war; that was the task of the Allied armies. The navy's role, although vital, was essentially a negative one—to avoid losing control of the sea routes. In this sense, the size of the warship losses at Jutland was relatively insignificant compared with the merchant-ship losses in the Atlantic during the following year. Beatty, for all his virtues (and vices) and for all his popularity, was a victim of these large historical tendencies. In the subtitle to his book, Roskill calls him "The Last Naval Hero", but one wonders if that is the right term. There were numerous British heroes during that war and even more in the one following, when the Royal Navy had to fight much harder to keep the convoys free of boy stokers, the crews of the anti-aircraft ships, the commanders of submarines and aircraft, the convoy escorts, provide many examples of courage and resolve. What there was not were fleet commanders, whose actions decisively and positively altered the course of the war. In the post-Nelsonic age, that was too much to expect.

Mandrake

Plantagenet and peasant, on the job
He might as well, my father ruled the workman's club

where twelve-pint men grew weary at the bar
and billiard balls rolled peacefully to war,

He'd married it, my Mother said, "That man
'ud be as happy with a frying pan."

She took in Irish lodgers, slaved and queued,
half in love with ancient rectitude,

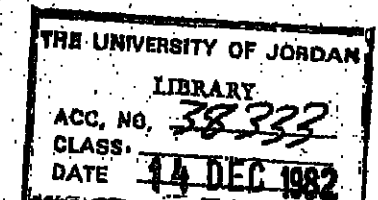
paid all the bills, complained, perfected looks
more dense than lovers' vows in library books.

The curd-school pondered, two by two: "young Jakes"
(Ma's withering label) tilted babychans

and little fingers, gathering muscle for
the leap from maidenhood to bottom drawer.

My choices still have genders: cosy-sad
back home with Mum, or packing straight to hell with Dad.

William Scammell



Channel crossing

By Peter Rickard

M. FERRAN, J. A. HUTCHINSON and J.-D. BIARD:
The Concise Oxford French Dictionary
Second Edition
French-English, 596pp.
English-French, 267pp.
Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press, £2.50
0 19 864126 5

CLAUDE DUBOIS (Editor-in-Chief):
Petit Larousse en Couleurs
1,665pp, with 4,430 coloured illustrations plus maps.
Paris: Larousse,
2 03 302381 8

A striking feature of the new Concise Oxford French Dictionary is that the English-French part is less than half the length of the French-English part. When one considers, however, that in the first edition (K-E, 1934; E-F, 1940) the English section was less than a third the length, we must regard the new edition as an improvement. Its slightly smaller print, and appreciably larger pages, compensate moreover for an overall reduction in the number of pages—a total of about 860 as against about 1,200. A somewhat better use of space is now used for headwords and for the numbers used in subdividing complex articles, and the general impression is one of neatly packed yet well-spaced articles, with excellent contrast of black and white. Proper names, originally listed separately, now occur in their alphabetical place in the main body of the work, in either language.

In spite of the relative increase in English-French pages it is clear that this is still essentially a dictionary for the English-speaking user who reads French—or wants to read it—and who has less occasion, and perhaps less ambition, to translate from English into French. This conclusion is further confirmed by the fact that tables of French irregular verbs are provided in the introduction (and are incidentally arranged more helpfully than before), while there is no corresponding section in the English-French part. The pronunciation of French, but not English words, is given throughout. On the other hand, the etymologies provided in the first edition for French, but not English, have now been dispensed with, thus providing space for information of a more urgent and practical kind.

The dictionary has clearly been revised and brought up to date in a great many ways. One quite im-

portant improvement is that French words which were already obsolete in 1934 but were not indicated as such are now clearly marked "obs.", e.g. *devers* (prep); *tendre* (sm); *mouche à miel* (savetier); while some have been dropped altogether. Archaic uses of words which are not in themselves archaic have largely been eliminated, e.g. *maître à queue* "methinks". The earlier inclusion of some highly specialized technical terms has been revised, thus *ténarostre* "thin-billed" has been dropped, as has also, with surely few to mourn its passing, the verb *plogner* (naut) "to felt, to sheath (a ship's bottom) with hair", while the related substantive *plog*, am (naut) "sheathing hair" has been replaced by the on the whole more useful *ploc* (interjection) "plop". *Baraque* "barrack" is now correctly spelled *baraque* and is now labelled "obs." but curiously enough the rare verb *baraquier* (trans) "to kneel (of camels)" is now included for the first time.

A useful feature inherited from the first edition is the special sign which calls attention to the *faux amis* of French vocabulary, e.g. "not: *fastidieux*": *fastidieux* "not: *fastidious*"; *mission* "not: *mission*"; *agenda* "not: *agenda*"; *opportunité* "not: *opportunity*". The lexicographer is, of course, not to blame if an overweening reader, thinking he knows what such words mean, fails to look them up: *caveat lector!*

The editor of the French-English part claims that he has sought to provide "a translation of most of the words and expressions likely to be encountered from Cornhill to the pages of a contemporary newspaper". A translation: *tout est là*. In glossing *chénille* the editor has clearly assumed that the reader will only come across it in a fairly archaic context; but it is also probable, given the cult of the contemporary, that he will come across it in contexts where the meaning given, "carnival mask", "grotesque disguise" will be wildly inappropriate. The same applies to *quartieron*, given only in the sense of "a quarter of a hundred", and *crâneau*, given only in the sense of "circular loop-hole". The user is clearly rightly urged to make cross-checks, since there are cases where this will not help, because what is suggested in one part is sometimes not even mentioned in the other. *Mélomane*, glossed as "melomaniac", "music-mad" (person) surely means no more than "music-lover", but one rarely has to try to check it. *Microplaque* is given as "silicon chip", but the reader is stymied if, not happening to know the French

name, he looks up "chip" or "silicon". *Echotier* equals "gossip-writer" but it will not be found under "gossip". Surprisingly, *informative* is not given at all, and if one looks up "data-processing", one gets only the ponderous *traitement de l'information*.

Some definitions in the English-French section have been corrected, e.g. "fan-vaulting", now correctly given as *voûte en éventail*. Here and there one could wish for a more appropriate French equivalent than the one given. I note in particular "vital statistics" (sv, "vital"), rendered by *mesures*: substitute *mensurations* and adjust the article *mensuration* accordingly. To "trigger off", sv, "trigger", would often be more appropriately rendered by *déclencher* than by *provoquer*, the only suggestion given.

Perhaps the most welcome improvement of all concerns examples illustrating grammatical and idiomatic points. The definite articles/pronouns *le, la, l', les* are now made to show off their paces in a most illuminating way: *whom* is provided with valuable practical examples, so are *will* and *would*. In French, *vouloir* is given a wider idiomatic range than before. It is a pity, though, that *sv, devoir* the earlier example *il semblait devoir réussir* has been dropped, since it serves to illustrate an extremely useful function of *devoir*.

All in all, the new Concise Oxford French Dictionary is a great improvement on the previous edition and is, within its self-imposed limits, a practical and largely up-to-date dictionary of handy use for the non-specialist English reader.

The 1981 edition of the *Petit Larousse* (printed in May 1980) maintains the high standards it has come to associate with this combined dictionary and encyclopedia, now a household word. Frequent revision and easy availability have deservedly made it the work of reference most readily consulted by printers and publishers (since the Academy's dictionary of 1932-35 has long been out of print and is being revised with agonizing slowness), as well as by a very large number of families who care about the education of their children. A comparison with, say, the 1958 edition reveals that where colour was quite exceptional then, it is black-and-white which is the exception now. The format is appreciably larger, though the number of pages is slightly reduced. A dictionary is very good indeed. After each headword has been defined, a number of typical uses are given (if it

is "that sort of word") and the level of discourse indicated. The range of vocabulary is extremely comprehensive, though one would have thought that if there was a space for including *brochephale* and *dolichocephale*, then *néocephale* should have been included as well.

In addition to fulfilling very thoroughly the more obvious functions of a dictionary, the first part of the *Petit Larousse* also provides the considerable bonus of frequent articles of an encyclopedic kind following immediately upon the formal definition of certain subjects and the demonstration of their principal uses. These "secondary" articles are often much longer than the "primary" ones, and are further illustrated, on the same page, by pictures, photographs and diagrams, mostly in colour.

Living things, animals, birds and plants (flowers and trees) are illustrated with great attention to detail and nuance; see for instance *manche religieuse*, *écureuil*, *poireau*, *vièvre*, *capucine*, and the mouth-watering pictures of raspberries (*fraisier*) and trout (*truite*).

Some examples may serve to illustrate the method used to convey encyclopedic information. The article *tabac* begins with a routine definition, followed by such figures as "the average Frenchman smokes 10 *tabacs*, *le même tabac*. This is followed by a paragraph of technical information about tobacco and a half page of illustrations and further notes on tobacco-processing and cigarette manufacture. The article on *la pipe* is followed by a brief description of methods of production, and on the same page detailed diagrams are provided, showing the processes involved in making white or red wine (here the coloured illustrations are particularly apposite). *Pipeline* is a true

text itself, but the whole process of laying pipelines is illustrated on the same page by detailed diagrams. An anatomical term like *jumbe* is accompanied by an *échec* of a pair of legs with bone arteries and nerves indicated by numbers related to a key. It is true that muscles are not shown, but the reader has only to turn to *anatomie* to find two whole pages of illustrations, among which there are at least enough muscles to tempt the artist. Artistic and literary movements are particularly well documented. Thus *symbolisme* includes a history of the movement, with the names of its principal exponents, while over the page one finds six examples of *symbolisme*: *arabesque*, *romantisme* and *(art)roman*—but not *pré-*

phallisme—receive the same treatment.

Volley-ball is accompanied by a detailed diagram of the court; *volcan* by diagrams showing four different types of eruption; *grube* by illustrations showing badges of rank in the French armed forces; *drapeau* by two pages of "flags of all nations"; *signalisation* by three sets of signs: *routièrre, ferroviaire, maritime*; *télévision* by eight coloured photographs and a diagram showing the organization of a transmission network.

With so much encyclopedic knowledge already available in the "dictionary", what are we to expect from the encyclopedic proper? As called? Above all, persons of some celebrity, titles of literary works (*le Cousin Pons*, *le Lac*, *le Grand Meaulais*), of paintings (*la Joconde*), of musical compositions (*le Cygne*), towns and cities (often illustrated), rivers and mountains, and, of course, countries. These last are given a brief geographical description followed by historical notes, and there is usually a map on the same page. For those interested in the history of art, painters mentioned in the dictionary under a particular school, can now be looked up as individuals, and further illustration or two may be found. Incidentally A. Ramay does not get an entry, although under Hume and under J. J. Rousseau we find the familiar portraits by that artist.

The world of entertainment is not so well represented. Chaplin, Keaton and Harold Lloyd are there, but not Laurel and Hardy, or the Marx Brothers; *Mistinequet* but not *Arletty*; Jean Gabin, Pierre Fresnay and Fernandel, but not Louis de Funès, Robert Hirsch, Belmondo, Jeanne Moreau or even "B.B.". Caruso, but not Gigli. Among authors, one misses Henri Bordeaux and Georges Ohnet. A selective check confirms that the biographies of celebrities are extremely up to date: thus the encyclopedia takes into account the death of Jean-Paul Sartre in 1980, and the death of Marguerite Yourcenar. The death of Sir Alfred Hitchcock (April 24, 1980) was presumably just too late for inclusion.

As appendices, we are given the membership of the five bodies which make up the Institut de France; a list of Nobel prize-winners; and an atlas of France, Belgium, Switzerland. No, the famous "pink pages" marking the boundary between the dictionary and the encyclopedia, have not been forgotten: they provide a now revised list of Greek, Latin and foreign quotations, and a list of French proverbs.

Of historical information there is taken over from the OED.

Wahrig's dream of completeness remains for ever unattainable, even with the help of a computer. Later, no doubt, it always goes to the editors to include, in their next printing, such newcomers as "Arbeitseinsatz", "Hänselbrot", "isch", "Blödeln", "Mücken" and "Jemanden abblitzen", as well as such old friends as "Walter Bauer" recently given respectability by Wolischläger's translation of Joyce's *Ulysses*, but not to be found in Brockhaus-Wahrig under the lemma "Bauer" or "Arbeitseinsatz", but in "Arbeitseinsatz", "Hänselbrot", "isch", "Blödeln", "Mücken" and "Jemanden abblitzen", as well as such old friends as "Walter Bauer" recently given respectability by Wolischläger's translation of Joyce's *Ulysses*, but not to be found in Brockhaus-Wahrig under the lemma "Bauer" or "Arbeitseinsatz", but in "Arbeitseinsatz", "Hänselbrot", "isch", "Blödeln", "Mücken" and "Jemanden abblitzen", as well as such old friends as "Walter Bauer" recently given respectability by Wolischläger's translation of Joyce's *Ulysses*, but not to be found in Brockhaus-Wahrig under the lemma "Bauer" or 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Tricks, traps and the will to believe

By Stuart Sutherland

DAVID MARKS and RICHARD KAMMANN
The Psychology of the Psychic
232pp. New York: Prometheus Books, \$16.95, \$8.95 (paperback).
0 87975 121 5
0 87975 122 3 (paperback)

JOHN TAYLOR
Science and the Supernatural
196pp. Maurice Temple Smith, £7.50.
0 85111 191 5

About thirty years ago, there lived near Oxford a Mr De la Warr, the inventor of a remarkable box with an impressive array of dials. When presented with a spot of blond or fair belonging to a patient, the box could diagnose and even cure a variety of diseases. Cures could be effected on patients living thousands of miles away, and the box was not unreasonably attained a certain celebrity at the time. It was, however, decided to display it in the United States: on arrival there, he was asked by a customs officer what his box contained. Mr De la Warr was somewhat embarrassed and said it was empty. The customs officer, not to be fooled off by such an implausible claim, insisted on forcing it open, only to find that it was indeed empty.

Like Mr De la Warr, today's psychologists often seek to make the occult more presentable by providing the veneer of science. At one time parapsychology was the province of religion, but in an age where faith in science is stronger than religious belief, the parapsychologist has to receive scientific validation before it becomes credible. Scientists have been only too willing to supply the necessary testimony, and the more remote the science from the study of people, the more vociferous have its adherents been in defence of the parapsychologist. It is not so long ago since Professor John Taylor was declaring that he could not possibly have been tricked by Uri Geller, and the Nobel Prize winning physicist, Professor Brian Josephson, is reported to have declared of one psychic, "We are on the verge of discoveries which may be extremely important for physics. We are dealing here with a new kind of energy." Psychists may be pretty shrewd when it comes to observing the behaviour of a nun or a platonist, but some of them can be rather simple-minded about people. Psychologists have been more sceptical of the paranormal, whilst magicians, dishing the dishonest use of their own tricks, have often been downright scathing.

Of the two books under review, *The Psychology of the Psychic*, written by two New Zealand psychologists, the other, *Science and the Supernatural*, by a British physicist. Their approach is very different. Although the former book is one of the most absorbing yet written on the subject, it is not rejected by over thirty publishers, apparently because it attacks the authenticity of psychic phenomena. Publishers know their market and while eager for material supporting the supernatural, are reluctant to publish books that attempt to expose it.

The aims of David Marks and Richard Kammann are to demonstrate that there is a natural explanation for some recent examples of "psychic" phenomena, to account for events of "naturally occurring" coincidences for what appear to be "psychic" events in everyday life, and to explain why three-quarters of the population of the Western world believe in the paranormal. They succeed in all three. Their book is a masterpiece of trickery in the sense that it is a long series of arguments, on the part of "supernaturalists", all the while, of a good detective story, and their exposition is exceptionally clear and lively.

One of the psychic performers with whom they deal is the now notorious Uri Geller, who claims to be able to bend spoons with his mind. Marks and Kammann add some interesting and detailed observations. The "supernatural" feature of this book is that Geller is shown to be a fraud, and that the "psychic" methods by which he could cheat

the tapes and matched up each tape to each scene. Several of the experiments gave remarkable results—for example, in two cases in which nine scenes had been covered, all nine tapes were matched with the correct target scene by the judge.

Kammann and Marks tried to replicate these experiments in New Zealand, and were at first astounded by their success: their receivers, on visiting the target they had just described, were amazed by the accuracy of their descriptions and were convinced they had received telepathic communications from the sender. Unfortunately, when the judges came to match up the descriptions with the targets, the results were no better than chance. In analysing why the receivers were so excited at their apparent success, Kammann and Marks found that there were so many different items in each recorded description that some of them were almost certain to match some feature of the target scene; on seeing the targets, the receivers were impressed by these matches and ignored the rest of the description they had given.

Marks and Kammann then investigated how it was that Uri Geller's "tricks" had been able to make such remarkably accurate matches. Their detective work was not made any easier by Puthoff and Targ's reluctance to disclose the details of their procedures. They were, however, able to establish that the nature of the scenes were normally shown to the judges in the order in which they had been recorded and hence they could match them to the scenes. Some of the descriptions were actually dated; others contained references to scenes transmitted earlier, which had of course been viewed by the receiver. As proof that this was the method used, Marks and Kammann established that judges who had never viewed the scenes at all, but who were given the scenes with the names of the scenes as well as did Puthoff and Targ's judges. Anyone who believes that such gross carelessness in the design of parapsychological experiments is unusual will be amused by reading C. M. Hare's new book, *ESP and Parapsychology*.

There are of course those who hold that psychic power is unlikely to be revealed under experimental conditions: guessing which of five cards a sender is looking at is too trivial an undertaking to rouse the latent capacity for telepathy. Arthur Koestler, another physicist at least by training, has argued for the reality of the paranormal by recounting forty or fifty remarkable coincidences that occurred outside the laboratory or in real life. He is, as it were, sometimes called "the real deal" in the field of the paranormal. Koestler's argument is that the odds are on a coincidence: most are guessed to find that if there are twenty-three people in a room, it is more likely than not that at least two of them will have their birthdays on the same day of the year. Marks and Kammann calculate that Koestler had access to eighteen billion pairs of events occurring on the same day either in his own life or in the life of someone known to him either personally or through writing. It would be remarkable if out of this huge number of pairs, no members of some pairs did not exhibit a striking match with one another.

Marks and Kammann point out that the main reason why belief in parapsychology remains so widespread is that many people, like Koestler, want to believe, and their interpretation of what they see and hear is shaped by their wishes. Moreover, people remember an unusual coincidence, but do not remember the innumerable occasions on which no coincidence occurred. In just this way, the subjects in the Marks and Targ telepathy experiments were deceived about their own success. Telling someone they are able by telepathy or graphology is not difficult. One psychologist says

whilst the program is running.

Taylor's new book details many instances of psychic phenomena: although he dismisses some as sensible grounds, he uncritically describes many of them, including Puthoff and Targ's long range telepathy experiments, as though there is no natural explanation for the results. Apart from titillating the reader, this shovelling of credulity enables him to discuss whether the results could be explained by electromagnetic radiation and to produce many splendidly dotty arguments. For example, he writes (page 53): "From the Rhine tests we know that quite small objects down to 1 cm can be observed [by clairvoyance]." He then argues that very short high frequency waves would be needed to detect such small objects. It is unlikely that our bodies either produce or are sensitive to such waves; moreover, over since they attenuate rapidly with distance, telepathy should be less accurate with increasing distance, but most of the evidence suggests that this is not so. Hence Rhine's claim must be false. Readers who struggle with the arguments of this rolling English physicist may be reminded of Chesterton's words: "That night we went to Birmingham by way of Beachy Head".

Despite the cogent criticisms of parapsychology made by Marks and Kammann and by C. E. M. Hare, and despite Taylor's demonstration that its findings are inconsistent with the known laws of physics, the subject continues to flourish. Indeed, it is supported by some of the richest and most prestigious institutions. The Ford Foundation has made large grants for parapsychological research, and Cambridge University in its wisdom recently awarded a doctoral degree for a thesis on the subject. But perhaps the most powerful testimony to the putative existence of the paranormal is that the Russians regard it as of potential military importance, and the curious assumption that, unlike telephonic or radio communications, telepathic messages would be safe from interception by the enemy. Not to be outdone, the United States Air Force, Army and Navy have all rushed to fund research on the subject.

It is small wonder that for every result shown to be fallacious two more spring into being: even Harbin might have quailed before a Hydra nourished by the combined might of the Russian and American armed forces. The spectacle of pomp and riches engaged on a fool's errand is always amusing, and one cannot but suspect that, however powerfully supported, parapsychology is pursuing a quest that will prove as empty as the late Mr De la Warr's box.

No guiding hand

By Jeremy Cherfas

PAUL COLINVAUX:
Why Big Flecko Animals are Rare
224pp. George Allen and Unwin.
£7.95
0 04 574015 1

Ecology has become something of a religion in the past few years and like all religions has a preponderance of superstitions. That these false beliefs are based on science makes them even more powerful. But Paul Colinvaux has cast himself as an iconoclast and sets out to replace belief with knowledge. Two threads run through his thoughts at all times, giving them a unity and a clarity that makes this book a pleasure to read. One is the certainty that things in the living world are the way they are, because they have evolved to be so; the other is an optimism, born of this certainty, that very little man can do will alter the way things are, or at least not for very long.

Ecologists, Colinvaux says, are the people who try to understand the workings of the "thin" fabric

This essay forms the introduction to a reprint of Humphry Trevelyan's *Goethe and the Greeks*, originally published in 1942, and due to be reissued by Cambridge University Press later this year.

Goethe's relationship to the Greeks is a very well-worn subject, particularly in Germany. German classical scholars have written much about it, and it is excellent. Rudolf Pfeiffer and Karl Reinhardt come to mind. But others have lapsed into sentimental adulation, which has stimulated an adverse reaction. Humphry Trevelyan's book *Goethe and the Greeks*, soon to be reprinted by the Cambridge University Press, gives a full account of the facts, and discusses them with calm and sober intelligence; it continues to be indispensable. In 1949, seven years after its publication, Ernst Curtius brought out the two splendid volumes of his *Goethe and the Greeks*, in which Goethe's writings and recorded utterances about each ancient author and each topic relating to the study of antiquity are arranged under the appropriate headings.

In 1807 a new classical periodical, the *Museum der Altertumswissenschaften*, was dedicated to "Goethe, dem Kenner und Darsteller der Griechischen Geistes". The person responsible for the dedication was Friedrich August Wolf, the leading Greek scholar of the time, and the view of Goethe's Hellenism which it implies was widely held throughout the nineteenth century and has even during Goethe's own lifetime it did not go unopposed. In 1817 the Romantic poet Ludwig Tieck wrote that Goethe's reverence for antiquity was "an empty superstition for a lifeless phantom with no substance", and that opinion was shared by many of his contemporaries.

In 1888, the last year of his activity, Nietzsche wrote that "Goethe did not understand the Greeks"; this pronouncement, seemingly based on a crude equation of Goethe's attitude with that of Winckelmann, has found many echoes since. In 1935 Miss E. M. Butler, in her *Goethe and the Greeks*, argued in a book called *The Tyranny of Greece over Germany* that the admiration felt for Greek culture by German writers, from Lessing to Goethe, was an unmitigated disaster to German culture. The National Socialists' coming to power, but it has interest as an extreme example of a widespread tendency.

Goethe's relationship to Greek art and literature is a matter of considerable importance, not only for the understanding of his own life and works, but for the history of European culture. Whatever the case, we can hardly deny that he, more than any other individual, was responsible for the immense energy devoted to the classical studies in Germany during the nineteenth century. At different times he took pains in order to obtain the kind of acquaintance with Greek art and literature that his purposes required, and considering the number and nature of his preoccupations, the knowledge of which he ended by possessing is a magnificent achievement.

He had a right regard for scholarship; he employed a good scholar, Friedrich Wilhelm Riemer, as his indispensable assistant; and he made effective use of his friendship with scholars of the highest rank, like Friedrich August Wolf and Karl Reinhardt. But we must be up our guard against the tendency of professors to claim him as one of themselves. His interest in antiquity was above all practical, designed to serve his own purposes: in this respect, as in every other, he was a Greek called *Kairos*, rather than a Greek called *Chronos*. There was always an ambiguity in his feelings about scholarship, and he remained, in the best sense of the word, an amateur, a dilettante. At the start of his career, classical studies were less highly regarded than at any time since the Renaissance. The wars of religion and the severe damage upon them as upon other branches of culture, the seventeenth century, his notable achievements, had

Goethe and the Greeks

By Hugh Lloyd-Jones

been on the whole a period of decline. It was then that the leading spirits of the French Enlightenment decided that they could now dispense with the aid of the ancient classics, which had helped their forebears to emerge from medieval darkness, but which had now been left behind in the advance towards illumination.

No country had suffered more from the wars of religion than Germany; and there the standing of classical studies sank particularly low. Early in the eighteenth century, prevailing trends were hostile to antiquity. Rationalists agreed with the French that it was out of date; but the disapproval of it because it had been unchristian. Greek studies were particularly backward; since the Renaissance, despite certain notable exceptions, most people had seen the Greeks through Roman spectacles. Of course many people had some acquaintance with classical mythology, usually derived from such compilations as the moralizing and euhemerizing handbook of Goethe's great-uncle, Johann Michael von Loen. Also, the French faction that had defended antiquity in the battle of the Books had a not unimportant German representative in Johann Christoph Gellert, and his disciple of Boileau; but the only literary products of this tendency were the facile Anacreontics of such writers as Gleim and Götze, and the rococo Hellenism of the early Weimar.

However, signs of a new tendency could be discerned. J. M. Gessner in Göttingen and J. F. Christ in Leipzig put new life into classical teaching in their respective universities. The influence of Fagel's *Télémaque*, using a Homeric subject to inculcate the newly fashionable virtues of simplicity and sincerity, could be seen in Germany. In a treatise published in 1740 the Swiss writer Johann Jacob Breitinger defended Homer against the strictures of Charles Perrault.

Klopstock and Lessing both derived inspiration from the ancients; Lessing's studies of ancient drama combined with his own plays to loosen the hold of French drama theory. In 1755, when Goethe was six, Winckelmann brought out his *Gedanken über die Nachahmung der Griechen in der Malerei und Bildhauerkunst*; eight years later came his great history of ancient art. The public was beginning to turn to the baroque and the rococo, and Winckelmann's *Gedanken* met with an immediate success.

The boy Goethe picked up ancient mythology rapidly, both from the books and from puppet-shows with titles like *Die Tragödie der römischen Kaiserin Medea*; he learnt Latin well enough to delight in Virgil's *Metamorphoses*, and made a start in Greek. But among the various languages with which he played about, Greek was the one he knew least well; in the novel consisting of letters from six or seven brothers and sisters supposed to be written from different places

and in different languages which he wrote when he was twelve or thirteen, Greek is used only in an occasional postscript added by an brother who writes Latin. It is at this age he read all of Racine and most of Corneille. After his illness in 1764, his study of philosophy in the condensed version of J. J. Brucker's history of the subject gave him a general acquaintance with the views of the principal Greek thinkers; and by the use of similar compendia he tried to obtain a notion of the main outlines of Greek history.

This made him aware of the deficiency of his linguistic knowledge; and when the time came for him to attend the university, he wished to study classical philology at Göttingen. In 1761 Christian Gottlob Heyne had taken up an appointment there, and no man living would have been better capable of giving Goethe the kind of training that he felt he needed. But Goethe's father insisted that he go to Leipzig to study law.

There were at Leipzig several people who could have helped Goethe greatly, if he had made a serious effort to pursue his Greek studies. But in what, on the face of it, seem the somewhat desultory intellectual activities of this period in his life Goethe had little part; the disappointment of an encounter with some modern Greeks who proved unable to give him the assistance he had hoped for may have discouraged him. But one important of this time proved important to his development: the school of art directed by Adam Friedrich Oeser, who had taught Winckelmann, contained a few casts of Greek statues, and Oeser drew Goethe's attention to the casts of ancient gems contained in the *Dokumente* of Philipp Daniel Lippert, which offered one of the few means then readily available of getting some notion of ancient art. Goethe was at all times deeply sensitive to visual impressions; his attitude towards the Greeks, his aesthetic sense, his taste for the study of gems and coins, Oeser also introduced him to the works of Winckelmann.

The great history of art, which had appeared in 1763, he did not read until he was in Rome in 1786; but he read at Leipzig, probably in 1766, Lessing's *Laocöon*. Winckelmann's essay on the imitation of the Greeks in painting and sculpture, and the two essays published to supplement that work during the following year. The effect of this may have been immediate, for in 1768 he visited Dresden without seeing the collection of antiquities; but in 1769, after his return home from Leipzig, he made an expedition to Mannheim to see the Elector's collection of casts, and a letter written at the time shows that the experience made deep impression.

Trevelyan has rightly pointed out that what impressed Goethe at the time was not Winckelmann's aesthetic theory but his picture of the Greeks as a people devoted to physical and intellectual beauty and free from the constraints imposed by a society such as that which Goethe himself lived in. It was then that he formed the opinion, which he never had occasion to revise, that the Greeks had been the people who, beyond all others, had lived in accordance with Nature. Winckelmann's celebrated notion that the essence of Greek art lay in "noble simplicity and quiet grandeur" did not at this time appeal to him. One of the casts that he had seen in Mannheim was of the Laocöon group, and Goethe took a lively interest in the celebrated controversy which it occasioned.

Winckelmann had praised the sculptors for making Laocöon merely man in his agony, and not a crowd as he does according to Virgil. Lessing had defended Virgil, pointing out that plastic art had different principles from literary art, and that Greek writers had been as ready as Virgil to represent the vocal expression of physical agony. Sculptors, on the other hand, Lessing thought, moderated that expression in order that their statues should be beautiful. The young Goethe was greatly struck by this treatise; but he refused to accept this theory. To him, whose art was based so firmly upon Nature, could not have been better down the expression of strong emotion so as to give beauty to their statues; and Goethe suggested that Laocöon does not scream only because he cannot do so, but because he cannot do so in the attitude in which he is portrayed, rendering it impossible. Whatever may be thought about this ingenious solution of the problem, it is remarkable that even at the age of twenty Goethe asserted his conception of the Greeks as living and creating in accordance with Nature in such a characteristic fashion.

The encounter with Herder in Strasbourg during the winter of 1770-1, so decisive in many ways, brought about a marked change in his attitude towards the Greeks. Herder's assertion of the rights of natural feeling against the intellectualism of the Enlightenment implied that the poetry of unpolished ages, epic, folk-song, and ballad, scorned by the sophisticated admirers of Voltaire, in fact possessed a special value.

The Goethe of the Sturm und Drang period admired Ossian; he admired Shakespeare far more; but a yet more important author in his eyes was Homer, upon whom he hung like a leech, with altogether fresh enthusiasm. Homer's original genius, which fell into his hands at this time, confirmed him in the impression that Homer, above all other poets, wrote in accordance with the dictates of Nature. Using the Latin version by Samuel Clarke that was reprinted in Ernesti's edition, he worked hard to understand the Greek, laying the foundations of what was to become a close acquaintance with the poems. In a letter of 1771 he claims to be able to read Homer almost without

the aid of a translation; Homer was probably the only Greek author with whom he attained this degree of familiarity.

At this time Goethe also read a little Plutarch and Xenophon, and formed the design of writing a play about the death of Socrates, but this, like so many of his projects, came to nothing. He also read Anacreon, Theocritus and Pindar, who all figure in his *Wanderers Sturmlied*, where he contrasts the two forms with the latter; but he can have had little notion of the real character of any of these authors. "Anacreon" at that time meant not the lyric and elegiac poet of the sixth century B.C. but the Anacreontic poems of later ages, from the time of the Byzantine, which had naturally been dear to the age of the Rococo.

I am inclined to question Trevelyan's view that Goethe will have found Theocritus relatively easy; at any rate, neither the praise of him in *Wanderers Sturmlied* nor any subsequent mention of him by Goethe suggests a very close acquaintance. Like most readers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Goethe thought of Pindar as a rude giant with no respect for the intellect, but derives from the account of Pindar's life by Pausanias, the second one of the four books, from the real author, then most imperfectly understood, even by scholars. The short lines in which *Wanderers Sturmlied* is written derive from the short lines in which Pindar wrote, but the text was customary for most of Pindar's life (Böckh's edition in his edition of 1811-1821; and the passage about Pindar might have been written without knowledge of Pindar's actual work. In 1772 Goethe worked hard at Pindar, doubtless using a translation; he made a translation of the fifth Olympian ode, ironically enough a poem whose Pindaric authorship has been questioned since ancient times and is rejected by most modern scholars; his ignorance of the principles of metrical composition between strophe and antistrophe does not prevent it from being a fine piece of work. Since Goethe followed the words of the original which are not irregular or "dithyrambic" in the modern sense.

How much acquaintance with Greek tragedy lies behind a reference to it in the address of Shakespeare's birthday given by Goethe in 1771 is not easy to determine. But definite evidence of his knowledge of at least one tragedy is contained in the dithyrambic short satire "Götter, Helden und Wieland" of 1773.

His marked resemblance to a dialogue of Lucian may be due to indirect influence; but it is worth remembering that Lucian had been the favourite author of Rektor Albrecht, who was the tutor of Goethe when he was a boy. Goethe ridicules what he thought the unsympathetic and patronizing treatment of the Greeks in the letters relating to it which Wieland had published in the *Freymüthler Mark*. The Rococo habit of using Greece to provide a trivial kind of décor is amusingly made fun of; but even more interestingly Goethe protests against an attitude to the legend which is still common among readers. For Wieland, as for many moderns, Admetus's acceptance of his wife's sacrifice of her life in order to save his appeared intolerable. To Goethe it seemed perfectly natural; and though Euripides's attitude in that regard is certainly allowed the rightness of Admetus's conduct to seem questionable in the scene in which he reproaches his parents for not having been willing to make the sacrifice, there is no doubt that the inventors of the one legend saw the matter as Goethe did. Goethe would have had little sympathy with modern attempts to show, by invoking a supposed irony or other unconvincing devices, that Admetus is being blacked for an attitude which to him seemed natural; and we find here a signal instance of his natural sympathy with Greek modes of thought, even when they are surprising or shocking to Christian or humanitarian sentiment.

Goethe makes a colossal Hercules of boundless vital energy ridicule Wieland for having represented him as a "stupid, ungrateful, and ungrateful" creature; and his Hercules

Twenty-Four Centuries Ago

They thought at first, but after they had sat longer than even kings can spare for that.

They told the servant it was about the war with Rome; so, grudgingly, he let them in. Tullius, upon fingers in mid-air. Over the war-gate board, about to win. Half-listened as they started to explain.

Rome had sent envoys: "They do not approve of our Etruscan pact. What shall we say?" The king had thrown his dice; he made his move. Saying "Kill" as we say "Mate" (the winning play). Not noticing the messengers go away.

Bad luck for the four Romans, and for all Who died as well in the ensuing wars. Nobody seeing chance had made a pun. "Large quantities of dice survive at Veii." Made of the bones of those ambassadors?

Alistair Elliot

